



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP), a project of the [Public Health Institute](#), started in January 2003 as a result of a five-year grant awarded by the [Stuart Foundation](#). This grant has since been extended through 2009.

Project Vision

No youth leaves the California child welfare system without a permanent lifelong connection to a caring adult.

Project Objectives

1. To increase awareness among the child welfare agencies and staff, legislators, and judicial officers in the state of the urgent need that older children and youth have for permanency
2. To influence public policy and administrative practices so that they promote permanency
3. To assist interested California county child welfare agencies and their community partners implement effective practices to achieve permanency for older children and youth

Project Activities

The Permanency for Youth Task Force

The Task Force is a statewide group with broad representation, including public and private organizations, youth and funders.

Task Force objectives are:

1. To facilitate collaborations between public and private agencies to achieve permanent lifelong connections for youth in the system
2. To create opportunities for key stakeholders (who affect outcomes for youth in the system):
 - a) To realize the need for permanent lifelong connections for youth
 - b) To understand that it is possible to achieve these connections
3. To identify and overcome structural barriers (within the system affecting youth) that prevent youth



from achieving permanent lifelong connections

4. To promote public relations, education and advocacy efforts that will address the needs of youth for permanent lifelong connections.

In November 2003, CPYP received a grant from the [Walter S. Johnson Foundation](#) to pursue the partnership objectives of the Task Force. The grant supported the work of three workgroups addressing issues of partnership between public child welfare agencies and a) the juvenile courts, b) group homes, and c) adoption/foster family agencies. The groups completed their work in September, 2005. A [summary report](#) with their recommendations on how effective partnerships can accomplish improved permanency outcomes for foster youth is available from CPYP.

The Task Force has been restructured to accommodate the growth and interest in youth permanency. The key changes to the structure and design of the Permanency for Youth Task Force are:

- The Task Force was transformed from a hundred or so interested members who attended intermittently into two committees, each having twenty consistently attending members with interest and expertise in the areas of practice and policy.
- The Practice Committee will be made up primarily of those who are performing or overseeing the work at the local county level and those who have day-to-day contact with the implementation.
- The Policy Committee will focus on legislation and policy development and implementation. The role of this group will be to advise and impact policy makers, and provide education on a broad base to facilitate needed changes to promote permanency statewide for all foster youth.
- The National Governors Association (NGA) permanency workgroup, which was working on many of the same issues as the Youth Permanency Task Force, was absorbed and incorporated into the Youth Permanency Task Force.

Technical Assistance to Counties

The project initially worked with four counties, San Mateo, Alameda, Stanislaus, and Monterey, to develop programs to achieve permanency for more youth. The project provided these counties with technical assistance over two and a half years to help them develop youth permanency practice in their counties. Each county is now working on the challenge of bringing the youth permanency work to scale so that all county youth have this service available to them. Each county has developed a youth permanence plan that includes the following target areas: administrative practices, permanency practice, identification of the project target group, staff development, partnerships, involvement of youth in finding their own permanency, and integration with other initiatives.

In the spring of 2005 CPYP began assisting ten more counties: Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles (Metro North region), Orange, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, and Sonoma. This work will continue through March 2008. CPYP plans to work with several additional counties beginning April 2008.



Emancipated Youth Connections Project (EYCP)

In 2005, funding was obtained from the [Stuart](#) and [Zellerbach Family Foundations](#) to develop a model program to seek and sustain permanent lifelong connections for older youth who have already emancipated from foster care without a permanent connection to a caring adult. Service was provided through June 2007 to twenty young adults who have emancipated from the child welfare system and who have been instrumental in promoting the idea that permanence for foster youth is critical. This project used lessons learned from other programs nationally that have been successful in establishing permanency connections for youth before they left the child welfare system. EYCP adapted these lessons in order to develop a model of service to young adults who have now left the child welfare system. EYCP made significant changes to existing models in order to address the needs and the current developmental stage of this young adult population. This process has led to the creation of a new model which will be made available to "After Care" programs and to others who are interested in providing service to this population group. The final report of the project will be available at the end of 2007.

Training

With the support of the [Zellerbach Family Foundation](#), a curriculum called "Preparing Youth for Permanent Family Connections" has been developed for use by California counties. It has been available since April 2005 to all public child welfare agencies and their partners through the Child Welfare Training Academies around the state. The [Bay Area Academy](#) offered the first youth permanence training in Santa Clara County on December 15, 2005.

In conjunction with the [California Youth Connection](#) (CYC) and the Bay Area Academy, the project supported the development of "[Digital Stories](#)" on permanency by current and former foster youth. These DVDs are available from CPYP and can be used in training.

Convenings

As a part of the development of CPYP, a national convening was held in April 2002 to explore the issues of permanency for youth. Subsequently, national convenings have been held in 2003, 2004 and 2005. In 2006, Casey Family Services took over the national convenings, thus allowing CPYP to focus its resources specifically on the work in California. [Reports](#) of the convenings are available here on the CPYP website.

Documents

To increase awareness of the issue, the project has developed several documents:

1. [Model Programs for Youth Permanency](#). A report on nine exemplary permanency programs throughout the U.S. and explanation of the critical elements of such programs.
2. [Youth Perspectives on Permanency](#). An exploration of youths' perspectives on permanency through a focus group process in partnership with the California Youth Connection (CYC).
3. [A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood](#). A joint publication with Casey Family Services, this document addresses the complex needs unique to



adolescents in foster care.

4. [Agency Self-Assessment Tool on Youth Permanence](#). This tool is designed as a way for an agency or state to reflect on youth permanency. We have designed the questions a) to help assess current work and b) to trigger thinking about people, organizations and methods that could be tapped to strengthen family permanency for youth in the future.
5. **Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanence**. Three summary reports of recommendations on how effective partnerships between child welfare agencies and a) the [juvenile courts](#), b) [group homes](#), and c) [adoption/foster family agencies](#) can accomplish improved permanency outcomes for foster youth.
6. **Organizational Development Guide for Youth Permanence** (forthcoming). This practice guide details what CPYP has found to be successful in working with public child welfare agencies on youth permanency practice, based on the project's experience in working with fourteen California counties.
7. **Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide on Family Search and Engagement** (forthcoming). A publication of the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning at the Hunter College School of Social Work, this guide outlines steps both for finding families and creating connections once family members are found.
8. **EYCP Final Report** (forthcoming). This report presents findings and recommendations from the Emancipated Youth Connections Project, a model program designed to seek and sustain permanent lifelong connections for older youth who have already emancipated from foster care without a permanent connection to a caring adult.

Evaluation

To measure results, CPYP is gathering data over time from workers in each county on the young people being targeted for youth permanency services. In addition, the project is doing a formative evaluation of each county's implementation process that will inform the child welfare field of strategies for implementation and change.

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